1: McGee E-5 (1894-1895)1898 NU31 Seri NU31

262 Probably second in importance among Seri prey, as a food-source merely, stand the multifarious fishes with which the waters of Seriland teem, particularly if the class be held to comprise the cetaceans and seals and selachians ranked as leaders of the fish fauna in Seri lore.

225 Naturally, whales lie outside the ordinary range of Seri game, yet they are not without place in the tribal economy. During the visit to the Seri rancheria near Costa Rica in 1894, it was noted that various [173] events—births, deaths, journeys, etc—were referred to "The Time of the Big Fish"; and it was estimated from apparent ages of children and the like that this chronologic datum might be correlated roughly with the year 1857. The era-marking event was memorable to Masbém, to the elder women of the Turtle clan, and to other mature members of the group, because they had been enabled thereby to dispense with hunting and fishing for an agreeably long time, and because they had moved their houses; but the providential occurrence was not interpreted at the time. On visiting Isla Tiburon in 1895, the interpretation became clear; along 172 the western shore of Bada Ballena, near the first sand-spit north of the bight, lay the larger bones of a whale, estimated from the length of the mandibles and the dimensions of the vertebræ to have been 75 or 80 feet long. It was evident that the animal had gone into the shoal water at exceptionally high tide and had stranded during the ebb; while the condition of the bones suggested an exposure to the weather of perhaps half a dozen years. On the shrubby bank above the beach, [361] hard by the bleaching skeleton, stood the new rancheria, the most extensive seen in Seriland, comprising some fifteen or twenty habitable jacales; and fragments of ribs and other huge bones about and within the huts[1] attested transportation thither after the building, while the shallowness of the trails and the limited trampling of the fog shrubbery gave an air of freshness to the site and surroundings. The 172 262 traditions and the relics together made it manifest that "The Time of the Big Fish" had indeed marked an epoch in Seri life; that when the leviathan landed (whether through accident or partly through efforts of balsa men) it was quickly recognized as a vast contribution to the Seri larder; and that some of the clans, if not the entire tribe, gathered to gorge first flesh and blubber, next sun-softened cartilage and chitin, and then epiphyses and the fatter bones. Some of the ribs were splin- [252] tered and crushed, evidently by blows of the hupf, in order to give access to the cancellate interiors; several of the vertebræ were battered and split, and nearly all of the bones bore marks of hupf blows, aimed to loosen cartilaginous attachments, start epiphyses, or remove spongy and greasy processes. Little trace of fire was found; in one case a mandible was partly scorched, though the burning appeared to be fortuitous and long subsequent to the removal of the flesh; and a bit of charred and gnawed epiphysis, much resembling the fragments of half-cooked turtle plastron scattered over Seriland, was picked up in

[1] One of the smaller vertebræ and part of a rib are shown in the upper figure of plate VI.

1: McGee E-5 (1894-1895)1898 NU31 Seri NU31

597 648 While the lieutenant attached no significance to the painting, the procedure would seem to have been a ceremonial adoption, such as might, for example, be used in connection with a confederate clan. The description of the painting is sufficiently explicit to identify the totem with that of the Turtle clan, represented by the clanmother and the daughter of the clan at Costa Rica in 1894 (plates XVIII and XXIV); but it is noteworthy that the salutation with which the ceremony terminated, and which may be rendered "Captain-Brother of the Sharks", would seem to identify the totem with the shark rather than the turtle.[1]

The second case of adoption (if so it may be styled) was that of Señor Encinas, after his bloodiest battle, in which nearly all of the Seri warriors were left on the field. In this case there was no ceremony, or at least none remembered by the beneficiary; he was merely informed by a delegation of aged dames that thenceforth he would be regarded as a stronger and more invulnerable chief (shaman) than any member of the tribe, and hence as the tribal leader.

173 563 727 The third instance is still less definite, though it seems to be trustworthy. There is a widespread tradition throughout Sonora that in the course of a brush between a band of Papago hunters and a marauding bunch of Seri warriors in the mountains southeast of Cieneguilla twenty-five or thirty years ago, a Papago maiden was captured and carried off to Tiburon; and that for some years thereafter—i. e., until the Papago had taken ample blood-vengeance—the intertribal animosity was exceptionally bitter. No wholly satisfactory basis for the traditions could be found among the Papago, though some of the silences of the old men were suggestive; nor was the tradition fully credited by Señor Encinas, despite its deep lodgment in the minds of some of his yoemanry. When Mashém was interrogated on different occasions, he merely shook his head in stolid silence; but when the device was adopted of inquiring the number of Papago children brought into the tribe through this woman he responded promptly with a snort of scorn, and followed this with the explanation that she never had children, and could not because she was an alien slave. The explanation was corroborated by clanmother Juana María and other matrons, with sundry expressions of contemptuous disapproval of the inquiry and scorn of the very idea that aliens could fructify within the tribe. Later, the ice being broken, Mashém intimated that the woman had recently died of old age and its consequences—doubtless as an outcast. On the whole, the direct testimony would seem to substantiate the tradition, and to supplement it with the short and simple annals of a spouseless and childless life (incredible of other tribes, but consistent

[124] [773] [1] This identification may possibly be correct, the collocation of the totem with the turtle was shaped through unwilling and perhaps misleading responses made by Mashém to inquiries in 1894—those responses denoting a sea monster which in the beginning helped the Ancient of Pelicans to make the world by pushing from below, and which is now very good food—a description apparently fitting the turtle more closely than the other animal.

1: McGee E-5 (1894-1895)1898 NU31 Seri NU31

with the customs of the Seri), endured for many years and ending at last in unpitied death.

Collectively the cases seem to define a germ, rather than a mature custom, of adoption. In the first case a benefactor (by means regarded as magical) was formally inducted into the reigning family; in the second case the conquering hero (through what were again regarded as magical means) was less formally recognized and venerated, even worshiped, as an all-powerful shaman; while in the third case a representative of the doughtiest alien tribe was enslaved, probably with motives akin to those expressed in the carrying of chargeless guns, the making of imitation machetes, and other fetishistic devices. Except in the first instance there is no indication of consistent custom; but since the entire history of the tribe clearly contradicts regulated adoption of aliens (and indeed affords no other example), it must be inferred that any such custom is intratribal rather than intertribal.

MARRIAGE

The most striking and significant social facts discovered among the Seri relate to marriage customs.

As noted repeatedly elsewhere, the tribal population is preponderantly feminine, so that polygyny naturally prevails; the number of wives reaches three or possibly four, averaging about two, though the younger warriors commonly have but one, and there are always a number of spouseless (widowed) dames but no single men of marriageable age. So far as could be ascertained, no special formalities attend the taking of supernumerary wives, who are usually widowed sisters of the first spouse; it seems to be practically a family affair, governed by considerations of convenience rather than established regulations—an irregularity combining with other facts to suggest that polygyny is incidental, and perhaps of comparatively recent origin.

The primary mating of the Seri is attended by observances so elaborate as to show that marriage is one of the profoundest sacraments of the tribe, penetrating the innermost recesses of tribal thought, and interwoven with the essential fibers of tribal existence. Few if any other peoples devote such anxious care to their mating as do the Seri;[1] and among no other known tribe or folk is the moral aspect of conjugal union so rigorously guarded by collective action and individual devotion.

The initial movement toward formal marriage seems to be somewhat indefinite (or perhaps, rather, spontaneous); according to Mashem it may be made either by the prospective groom or else by his father, though not directly by the maiden or her kinswomen. In any event the prerequisites for the union are provisionally determined in the suitor's family; these relate to the suitability of age, the propriety of

[1] Perhaps the closest parallel in this respect is that found in the elaborate marriage regulations prevailing among the Australian aborigines, as described by Spencer and Gillen, Walter E. Roth, and other modern observers.

2: Kroeber E-5 (1930) 1931 NU31 Seri NU31

NEW DATA

Informants' Attitude

Most of my information was obtained from Chico Romero, the present official chief, a man of about 38. Santo Blanco and one or two other men contributed occasionally. Sr. Thomson was present most of the time and aided materially, both in encouraging the Seri and in helping to formulate questions suitably to their experience and comprehension. For instance, he repeatedly cleared up points in the kinship system by applying his knowledge of the actual relationship of Seri individuals, or their acquaintance with his relatives, to frame concrete cases, real or hypothetical, for which a denomination was then readily given. Without this aid, the system could not have been obtained with either reasonable surety or correctness. So far as possible, direct questions were replaced by giving to the Seri accounts of customs attributed to the Cocopa, of whose existence they know, and suggesting comparisons, in which they proved interested. On the whole, their attitude was friendly, coöperative, and appeared unsecretive. Concealment may be so automatic a habit with them that they practice it without giving a sign; but I had the constant impression that they told little about their religion because they knew little, and not from any skilfully concealed reluctance. Still, all negative statements must be regarded as only tentative when secured in a brief time through an imperfect medium of communication from informants not accustomed to mental exertion.

Historical Tradition

There were formerly four tribes, according to the informant: to the East, the Seris, at Pueblo de los Seris (the ex-mission, across the river from Hermosillo); to the West, the Tiburones, on the island; to the North, at Tepoca, the Xeka'aikö'ye; to the South, at Tastiota, the Antepkê'itaX or Tastioteños. Too many died at Pueblo Seris, so they joined the Tiburones. They fought the northern and southern groups. Sixty (or 68) Seri-Tiburones once went to Tepoca to kill a man and his two sons. They made marks and stuck a knife in the trail to cause them to stop. Then they shot them. The women and children were captured, taken to the island and kept, the women first being abused by the whole party. The informant's son José Manuel (13) had a Tepoca maternal grandmother; that is, the informant, now about 38, married the daughter of a Tepoca woman. (This would put the incident hardly earlier than 1860 or later than 1890.) Similarly, there is Tastioteño blood among the present Seri. The dialects of the several tribes are said to have been distinct, though allied.

It is evident that these memories cover only the last part of the period of Spanish contacts.

262 now," while the *Volsella* has been eaten in the past just as much as it is now. The find of these four 172 species in great numbers in the kitchen-middens only indicates that they probably were an important part of the Seri past. Historical records are scarce and no archaeology had ever been done in the region, except for Gifford's (as yet unpublished) excavations at Caborca. But Caborca is far away from the coast. Strong circumstantial evidence suggests that a good many of the kitchen-middens represent relics of the Seris' past encampments.

262 The verbal data for the Seris' past use of some species of molluscs in their diet is uncertain or unavailable. But it is safe to assume that if the animal is eaten today, then it certainly had been [174] also eaten in the past. It is not probable that the Seris should suddenly develop a taste for obscure kinds of animal food, while the entire trend had been in the other direction.

Of the different species the augur shell and the cone shell were said to have been "eaten in the past by the gianta. Maybe 300-400 years ago." It is [173] hard to account for this idea except that it probably refers to a myth.

Preparation

252 Preparation of the mulluscan food differs little, if at all, from any other food of animal origin. The animals are simply separated from the shell, the meat is dropped in water and boiled, usually [263] for half an hour. Few ingredients other than salt are added and their use depends entirely on the availability of cash and on the individual tastes of the Indians. As far as I could tell, there is no differentiation in this for people of different sexes 262 or ages. Also there is no preference for different parts of the body.

Preferences

Some species are more liked than others, but this is related to their size rather than anything else. There does not appear to be any belief in the toxicity of molluscs and the occasional justification of the inedibility has been expressed in terms of size. Some species, it had been asserted, are not eaten simply because they are too small * [825] to bother. Only *Cardium consors*, as one of the informants suggested, is venomous, but even this, to him, seemed uncertain and dubious for he said "maybe it is venomous."

Other Uses

301 a) *Decoration*: A considerable number of shells * 825 were reported as used for decoration. The tabulation indicated altogether 10 species that had been or still are used for ornament. Three of these are discarded now, seven still in use. This is mostly in the form of various sorts of necklaces, which the women string on ordinary thread. *Solenostira pallida* is supposed to be worn as such by women and children, while *Cerithium stercusmuscarum* by the boys only. But I have never seen either of them make use of it in any way. On the other hand, *Trivia radiana* and the *Olive shell* are much

[P. 39 A]

11: Moser L-5 (1956-1961) 1963
NU31 Seri NU31

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FIG. 1. Area of Present Seri Occupation

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One descendant of this band states that long ago his ancestors wandered north from the region of Guaymas. Eventually, they established land rights to the coastal area extending from Campo Ona on the south to Puerto Lobos on the north. Before long, however, they relinquished claim to the area between Campo Ona and Punta Tepopa.

It is to be understood, of course, that groups from this band, as well as groups from other bands, at times ranged far afield from their respective territories. Band I, for instance, had campsites as far north as the mouth of the Colorado River.

642 BAND II *xika xnai kkoii* "they who live toward the south wind"

101 131 This group is commonly referred to as the Tastioteño. These people roamed the coastal area from Guaymas to Bahia Kino.

BAND III *ta?eowkw kongkaak* "the people of Tiburon Island"

This band is referred to in the literature as the Seri or Tiburones. At one time their territory included only the northern and eastern coasts of Tiburon Island. Later it was extended to include the whole coastal strip of the mainland directly opposite the island.

BAND IV *?eno kongkaak* "the people of the desert"

The area this band occupied in the center of Tiburon Island is shown in Fig. 2.

642 131 173 628 [101] BAND V *xnaamotat* "they who came from the direction of the south wind"

The Seri believe that this band came originally from a region south of Guaymas. It may have been the Upanguayma group mentioned in the literature. Its members came in contact with the members of Band II with whom they resided, apparently for a period of years. Whether the *xnaamotat* were Seri or non-Seri, [99] I have been unable to ascertain. Since no informant suggests that this group spoke another language besides Seri, it seems reasonable to believe that it was simply a distinct dialect group.

642 628 721 [131] The *xnaamotat* were a belligerent people and, after fighting broke out between them and the members of Band II, they traveled northward. Eventually they established themselves on the relatively small coastal strip located east of Punta Tepopa as shown in Fig. 2.

642 BAND VI *xika ?ast ano koii* "they who live in the mountains"

[101] [131] This group, which has been recognized previously only by Griffen, inhabited San Esteban Island. It laid claim also to the greater part of the coast on the southern end of Tiburon Island. One informant stated that in earlier times this band had ranged over all of Tiburon Island except for the northern two-thirds of the eastern coast, but that they were slowly pushed southward by the movements of other groups.

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621 Little information could be elicited about subdivisions 7, 8, 9, and 10. The reason for this might be that Band VI was slow in [167] abandoning those coastal areas (if it actually did inhabit them) [628] as it was being displaced by Bands III and IV.

621 The Seri say that long ago several men, called *?ant i?akimhoh* 642 "they who explain the land," came to Tiburon Island and told the ●173 people along the eastern shore that they owned also a corre- 425 sponding strip of land on the mainland. Thus the inhabitants of 167 subdivisions 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 laid claim to the coastal areas directly across the channel from them as shown by the dotted lines on Fig. 4. They assumed that their new territories extended inland to include as much terrain as they chose to claim. At first the [922] people went to their mainland areas primarily to gather cactus fruit. Eventually some of them remained on the mainland and established subdivisions 11 and 12. This establishment superseded the claims of the five Tiburon Island subdivisions to their main- [101] land territories. Although the mainland subdivisions 11 and 12 formed, in some respects, a separate band in their own right, they retained their name, *ta?eowkw kongkaak* "the people of Tiburon Island." Eventually this group returned to Tiburon.

621 Of subdivisions 13 and 14 which are shown on Fig. 4, very 642 little is known. The people of subdivision 13 inhabited an area 131 encompassing the northern end of the dry lake, La Playa Noriega [829] (San Bartolo). Some of the Seri believe that these people were [172] giants. Although in this area I have found clay figurines and other [173] artifacts common to abandoned camps elsewhere, the Seri do not know the names of the camps of this subdivision. Subdivision 14 occupied the area surrounding the southern end of the same dry lake.

Subdivision 15 occupied the general area which is now Villa de Seris, a settlement on the southern edge of Hermosillo. As [167] Hermosillo grew, it became increasingly difficult for these Seri to maintain their customary way of life, and they eventually returned to Tiburon Island.

642 BAND VI
621 Band VI became divided into four subdivisions, the names of 101 which are:

xnitom	"_____"
pahii	"flint"
kofte oki ifa	"large iguana peninsula"
koiih	"tubular"

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BAND V

It was stated above that this band fought with Band II and then with Band I. Since Band V was likely killing cattle, they also may have been harassed by soldiers. Eventually Band V abandoned its territory near Punta Tepopa and headed south along the coast to a camp near present-day Bahia Kino. From this camp the entire group disappeared and was never seen again by members of the other bands. The Seri of today believe that Band V either traveled inland or was destroyed by a non-Seri force.

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BAND II

These people were rustlers and marauders. Government intervention in the situation was inevitable. The Seri recount the following final encounter between this group and the government forces.

The entire remaining membership of Band II was hiding out in a nearly inaccessible swamp thicket at Bahia Kino. Knowing that an armed force of soldiers and ranchers was searching for them, the people left their camp to seek safety elsewhere. Almost immediately they were attacked by the superior armed force which proceeded to wipe out the whole group. A youth who had avoided capture is said to have reported the affair to the Seri on Tiburon Island. This event may have occurred during the Encinas Wars fought from 1855 to 1865.

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BAND VI

The members of this band on San Esteban Island were little interested in the mainland and did not participate in the raids on man and livestock there. Nevertheless, they were to share in the severe punishment meted out to the bands guilty of multitudinous depredations.

Sometime after the massacre of Band II, a ship arrived at San Esteban, and many of the people were induced to go aboard. The rest of the inhabitants followed the ship to a camp on the eastern side of Tiburon Island where they were to receive gifts. As the people congregated, they were herded into a stone corral. Apparently, some of the San Esteban men were killed at this time. The rest of them, along with the women and children, were taken to Santa Rosa point on the mainland. Here, the Seri say, more of the men were killed. The remaining men were strung together by wire and led away, never to return.

The San Esteban women and children, along with some Tiburon Island women and children (of Band III), were taken in

so named must be of the same sex as the first. The significance of land ownership needs further investigation.

Many of the Seri still prefer, when possible, to live in their chosen band area. Sometimes a person, when he is approaching death, will ask to be taken to his own i?iziiting, where he can die and be buried in the area of his choice.

NOTES

1. Due to printing limitations, stress on Seri words has been omitted, and several orthographic symbol changes have been made for this paper. The phonetic values of the symbols used are the following: p is voiceless labial stop; t is vl. dental stop; k is vl. velar stop; ? is glottal stop; f is vl. labial flat spirant; w is vl. labial grooved-rounded spirant; s is vl. alveolar spirant; z is vl. alveo-palatal spirant; l is vl. lateral spirant; h is vl. velar spirant; x is vl. back velar spirant; m is labial nasal; n is dental nasal; ng is velar nasal; y is palatal semivowel; i is a high close front vowel; e is a low close front vowel; a is a low open central vowel; o is a mid close back vowel.

2. These data were compiled during field trips to the Seri camps during the years 1956-61, the studies being carried out under the auspices of the Summer Institute of Linguistics. The principal informant was R. Herrera T. whose information was checked with and supplemented by nine of the older members of the tribe. I am indebted to my colleague, David Thomas, who read an earlier draft of this paper and made helpful suggestions.

3. 1) W. J. McGee, "The Seri Indians," *Bureau of American Ethnology, Annual Report*, No. 17, Part 1. Washington, 1898. 2) A. L. Kroeber, "The Seri," *Southwest Museum Papers*, No. 6. Los Angeles, 1931. 3) W. B. Griffen, "Notes on Seri Indian Culture, Sonora, Mexico," *Latin American Monograph Series*, No. 10, Gainesville, 1959.

4. It will be noted that between subdivision 3 and 4 on Fig. 3 there is an unnumbered area, the status of which is uncertain.

5. Kroeber states that McGee's concept of Seri maternal lineages crystallized into totemic clans with matron rule seem a fantasy. In Kroeber's opinion, "The Seri may never have had sibs or clans; but the fact that they appear to lack them now is no positive evidence that they were without them three centuries ago. Shifts of residence, contraction of territory, shrinkage of numbers, amalgamation of distinct bands, may well have obliterated much of such social fabric as they once possessed."

Griffen discusses the nature of the former Seri bands and states, "they may have been patrilineal and exogamous. The criteria . . . that Julian Steward has exposited for the formation of exogamous, patrilineal bands . . . are and presumably would have been met formerly in the Seri habitat." Griffen lists other aspects of this type of band which are also verified to some extent by his data. From reading his material, it is obvious that he suspects the existence of clans at some earlier period. He emphasizes the need for further investigation.

6. G. P. Murdock, *Social Structure*, Macmillan Co., New York, 1949.

7. Marriages were usually contracted within the band.

8. As Kroeber points out, their memory likely covers only the latter part of the period of Spanish contacts.

9. The Seri recall nothing of Seri-Pima contacts and little of Seri-Apache relations.

10. The story is related that one day some Seri entered a cave where they found several Papago jugs filled with seeds. Being hungry, the people ate the seeds and left some arrows as token payment. The Seri say that the Papago apparently believed the arrows were intended as an insult. Fighting broke out soon afterward.

11. The Seri concept of the band annihilations is seen to be in contradiction to McGee's statement (p. 132): "Concordantly with their primary characteristic, the Seri have avoided ethnic and demotic union beyond the narrow limits of their own kindred; and even of these they seem to have cast out parts, annihilating the Guayma and Upanguayma, displacing and nearly destroying the Tepoka, and outlawing individuals and (apparently) small groups."

SERI BLUE

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ABSTRACT

The blue which the Seri Indians of Sonora, Mexico, use in face painting is not the mineral dumortierite, as previously believed, but is a prepared pigment. This paper is a description of the process in which three elements are combined to produce this pigment.

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McGee and Kroeber reported the mineral dumortierite as the source of the blue pigment used in Seri face painting (McGee 1898: 165-6; Kroeber 1931: 27). Coolidge described two blues, one a mixture of gypsum and a boiled root, the other a blue stone found on Tiburon Island (Coolidge 1939: 200). Xavier mentioned dumortierite and commercial bluing. She also referred to a third blue obtained from a plant on Tiburon (Xavier 1946). Present investigation has shown that as far as the Seri know, the only blues they have ever used are *ika?óil* "to cause to be blue" (commercial bluing) and the highly prized *?antezj kóil* "blue clay" of their own manufacture.[1]

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The components and the method of manufacture of *?antezj kóil* are said to have been taught to the women long ago by *?ant i?akímxoj* "they who tell the things about the earth." The actual color transformation is veiled in mystery to the Seri who say that if the process of making the clay is observed by any girl who has not passed the menarche, the blue will not appear. Its appearance is not attributed to shaman power, however.

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?antezj kóil has been in less demand during the last few decades since commercial bluing has been readily available. Nevertheless, *?antezj kóil* is the blue preferred by those women who continue to adorn their faces in the traditional manner.

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The three ingredients used in making the blue clay are the root bark of *xkoktz (Franseria dumosa)*, *iki kóizj* "to grind with" (a mixed clay in which montmorillonitic layers predominate), and *mokni óoxW* "excrement (sap) of *mókni (Guaiacum coulteri)*." The Seri say that the *iki kóizj* and the *mókni* are found only on Tiburon Island. The root bark of *tinkl (Franseria ambrosioides* Cav.) or of *xneejan siiktoj (Stegnospermum halimifoliam)* can be used instead of *xkoktz*. *tinkl* gives a distinct aroma to the clay. The plants mentioned are fairly common along the Sonoran coast.*

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*EDITOR'S NOTE: It is interesting to note that none of the ingredients is blue in its unaltered state.